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FARM LABOR

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FLORIDA

The number of workers paid by farmers and agricultural services totaled 53,000 for the week of October 12 through 18. Farmers hired 49,000 workers compared with 45,000 in July 2003 and 57,000 in October 2002. Agricultural services provided 4,000 paid workers, up 1,000 from last quarter, but 1,000 less than those supplied a year ago.

Crop producers welcomed drier weather during the survey week. The clear conditions provided nearly ideal weather for peanut and cotton harvesting. Sugarcane harvesting advanced with mills beginning to open during the survey week. Citrus harvesting for fresh market sales was active as processing plants received eliminations and field tested fruit to

determine harvest start dates. Vegetable planting and harvesting were active.

The October all hired worker wage rate averaged \$9.54 per hour, one cent more than the July 2003 wage of \$9.53, and 85 cents or ten percent above the \$8.69 paid last year. Farmers paid an average of \$9.53 per hour, two cents less than the \$9.55 paid in July, but 86 cents or ten percent above the \$8.67 paid last year. Agricultural services paid workers an average of \$9.65 per hour, forty cents higher than the \$9.25 paid in July, and 65 cents or 7 percent above the October 2002 wage.

UNITED STATES

There were 1,197,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of October 12-18, 2003, down 1 percent from a year ago. Of these hired workers, 891,000 workers were hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 306,000 workers.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$9.05 per hour during the October 2003 reference week, up 10 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$8.42 per hour, up 8 cents from last October, while livestock workers earned \$8.64 per hour compared with \$8.42 a year earlier. The field and livestock worker combined wage rate, at \$8.47 per hour, was up 11 cents from last year.

The number of hours worked averaged 40.2 hours for hired workers during the survey week, down fractionally from a year ago.

The largest decreases in number of hired farm workers over last year occurred in the Northeast I (New England and New York), Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi) and Northeast II (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania) regions and in California and Florida. In the Northeast I and II regions, rain and strong winds slowed field activity, reducing the demand for hired workers. Dry weather in the Delta region during the weeks prior to the reference week allowed harvest of most field crops to progress ahead of normal. Therefore, fewer field workers were needed with less acreage left to harvest. In California, extreme heat throughout the summer and early fall continued to push the maturity of many fruit and vegetable crops well ahead of normal. During the reference week much of the harvest activity was winding

down, which caused fewer workers to be needed. Decreased citrus harvest in Florida reduced the demand for hired workers.

The largest increases in number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Lake (Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin), Southeast (Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina) and Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada and Utah) regions. Warm, dry conditions in most of the Lake Region allowed field crop harvest and fall tillage activity to increase, causing more hired workers to be employed. Fruit and vegetable harvests were also in full swing in Michigan despite some brief rain delays. In the Southeast Region, ideal weather accelerated harvest activity, thus requiring more hired workers. Apple production in Utah was up considerably from last year's freeze-damaged crop, which increased the need for hired workers in the Mountain II Region.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in Florida, the Northeast I, Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia), Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri), Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana and Ohio) and Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas) regions. The higher wages in Florida, the Corn Belt I and Northeast I regions were mainly due to a higher percentage of nursery and greenhouse workers in the work force. Wages in the Appalachian II region were higher due to a larger proportion of equine workers in the work force. Corn Belt II wages were higher due to a greater percentage of full-time salaried workers in the work force. Wages in the Southern Plains region were up because of a larger concentration of higher paid feedlot workers.

Table 1 -- Florida agricultural workers, number of workers, wage rates, and hours worked, October 12 - 18, 2003, with comparisons

Employer, Year, and survey week	Hired Workers							
	Number of workers			Hours Worked Per Week	Wages Paid by Type of Work			
	All	Expected to work			All	Field	Livestock	
		150 days or more	149 days or less					
HIRED BY FARMERS								
		Thousands		Hours	Dollars Per Hour ^{1/}			
2003								
	October 12 -18	49.0	43.0	6.0	39.1	9.53	8.55	7.95
	July 6 - 12	45.0	39.0	6.0	39.0	9.55	8.55	8.30
	April 6 - 12	53.0	42.0	11.0	38.3	8.86	8.05	8.10
	January 12 - 18	70.0	56.0	14.0	37.2	8.81	7.80	8.30
2002								
	October 6 - 12	57.0	51.0	6.0	38.9	8.67	7.50	8.60
	July 7 - 13	43.0	38.0	5.0	37.5	8.48	7.25	7.80
	April 7 - 13	52.0	46.0	6.0	40.6	8.57	7.75	7.50
	January 6 - 12	62.0	50.0	12.0	37.2	8.97	8.15	8.55
2001								
	October 7 - 13	51.0	44.0	7.0	41.8	8.84	7.70	8.00
HIRED BY AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2003								
	October 12 -18	4.0			38.0	9.65		
	July 6 - 12	3.0			41.0	9.25		
	April 6 - 12	17.0			33.0	9.40		
	January 12 - 18	17.0			32.0	9.35		
2002								
	October 6 - 12	5.0			31.5	9.00		
	July 7 - 13	4.0			42.5	9.25		
	April 7 - 13	11.0			34.0	9.00		
	January 6 - 12	19.0			38.5	8.25		
2001								
	October 7 - 13	5.0			34.0	8.70		
HIRED BY BOTH FARMERS & AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2003								
	October 12 -18	53.0				9.54		
	July 6 - 12	48.0				9.53		
	April 6 - 12	70.0				8.98		
	January 12 - 18	87.0				8.90		
2002								
	October 6 - 12	62.0				8.69		
	July 7 - 13	47.0				8.55		
	April 7 - 13	63.0				8.63		
	January 6 - 12	81.0				8.80		
2001								
	October 7 - 13	56.0				8.83		

^{1/} Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

**Table 2 -- Number of workers hired by farmers, wage rates, and hours worked,
selected States, October 12 - 18, 2003, with comparisons ^{1/}**

Item	Florida	California	Texas & Oklahoma	Arizona & New Mexico	Hawaii	United States ^{2/}
Thousands						
All hired workers						
October 12 - 18, 2003	49	230	54	18	7	891
July 6-12, 2003	45	*225	61	18	7	*943
October 6 - 12, 2002	57	270	58	19	8	940
Expected to work						
150 days or more						
October 12 - 18, 2003	43	179	43	15	6	626
July 6-12, 2003	39	*205	49	16	6	*680
October 6 - 12, 2002	51	222	46	16	7	685
149 days or less						
October 12 - 18, 2003	6	51	11	3	1	265
July 6-12, 2003	6	*20	12	2	1	*263
October 6 - 12, 2002	6	48	12	3	1	255
Dollars per hour ^{3/}						
All hired worker wage rate						
October 12 - 18, 2003	9.53	9.13	8.01	8.18	11.56	9.05
July 6-12, 2003	9.55	*9.22	8.15	8.07	11.25	8.88
October 6 - 12, 2002	8.67	9.39	7.57	8.25	11.02	8.95
Wages by type of worker						
Field & Livestock						
October 12 - 18, 2003	8.48	8.54	7.39	7.63	9.88	8.47
July 6-12, 2003	8.51	*8.55	7.60	7.55	9.55	*8.26
October 6 - 12, 2002	7.72	8.68	7.18	7.42	9.32	8.36
Field						
October 12 - 18, 2003	8.55	8.37	7.12	7.16	9.82	8.42
July 6-12, 2003	8.55	*8.43	7.62	7.11	9.55	*8.17
October 6 - 12, 2002	7.50	8.60	7.05	7.07	9.25	8.34
Livestock						
October 12 - 18, 2003	7.95	9.80	7.70	8.73	^{4/}	8.64
July 6-12, 2003	8.30	*9.65	7.58	8.41	^{4/}	*8.57
October 6 - 12, 2002	8.60	9.30	7.32	8.24	^{4/}	8.42
Average hours per week						
Hours worked by all hired workers						
October 12 - 18, 2003	39.1	42.7	41.7	47.9	38.9	40.2
July 6-12, 2003	39.0	*45.7	38.2	47.7	36.7	*39.8
October 6 - 12, 2002	38.9	45.5	41.7	45.7	37.9	40.4

^{1/} Excludes Agricultural Service workers.

^{2/} United States excludes Alaska.

^{3/} Value of any perquisites provided are not included in wage rates.

^{4/} Insufficient data for this category; included in all hired wages.

* Revised.

ANNUAL WAGES, HIRED WORKERS AND HOURS

The 2003 U.S. hired worker annual average wage rate was \$9.08, up 3 percent from the 2002 annual average wage rate of \$8.81. The U.S. field worker annual average wage rate was \$8.31, up 19 cents from last year's annual average. The field and livestock worker combined annual average wage rate at the U.S. level was \$8.42, up 3 percent from last year's annual average wage rate of \$8.18.

The 2003 hired worker annual wage rate for Florida averaged \$9.14, up 45 cents or five percent from 2002 annual average of \$8.69 per hour. The annual average wage rate for Florida field workers was \$8.18, up 47 cents or six percent from last year's annual average. The field and livestock worker combined annual average wage rate for Florida was also \$8.18, up 40 cents or five percent from last year's annual average wage rate of \$7.78.

Table 3--Annual average wage rates, number of hired workers, and hours worked, 2003 and 2002 ^{1/2/}

State and Region	Wages by Type of Worker			Number of Hired Workers	Hours Worked by Hired Workers
	All Hired	Field	Field & Livestock		
2003					
Florida	9.14	8.18	8.18	54.2	38.2
Texas & Oklahoma	8.30	7.61	7.73	53.5	39.2
Arizona & New Mexico	8.08	7.07	7.54	18.5	47.5
California	9.25	8.34	8.50	227.5	43.0
Hawaii	11.33	9.56	9.60	7.0	37.2
United States ^{3/}	9.08	8.31	8.42	836.0	39.5
2002					
Florida	8.69	7.71	7.78	53.5	38.5
Texas & Oklahoma	7.76	7.17	7.29	63.2	40.5
Arizona & New Mexico	8.23	7.33	7.61	18.5	45.6
California	9.14	8.34	8.46	245.2	44.5
Hawaii	11.07	9.40	9.42	7.5	37.1
United States ^{3/}	8.81	8.12	8.18	885.7	39.8

^{1/} Excludes Agricultural Service Workers.

^{2/} Annual rates are averages of the published wage rates for each survey week weighted by the number of hours worked during the week. The annual average for all States, Regions, and the U.S. is based on data collected for January, April, July, and October.

^{3/} Excludes AK.